**What is Freedom of the Press?**

Freedom of the press is the liberty to print or disseminate information, by printing, broadcasting, or through electronic media, without prior restraints such as licensing requirements or content review and without subsequent punishment for what is said as well.

* Freedom of the press is not only limited by government but also churches sometimes as well.
* In the United States, freedom of the press is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution and is considered a fundamental right of the people.
* Some kinds of publication (such as violations of copyright) is considered outside of the amendment's purview.
  + Like commercial advertising or product claims, receive a reduced level of protection.
  + Also, broadcasters are subject to government licensing requirements.

Thomas Jefferson believed that a free press is essential to liberty.  
He said, "The basis of our government being the opinion of the people, the very first object should be to keep that right; and were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate for a moment to prefer the latter."  
The press is a very broad term that includes newspapers, television, radio, books, lectures, movies, art, dance, telephone, cassettes, CDs, video discs, magazines, electronic bulletin boards, computer networks, billboards, and video tapes.